

***Amendments to the Claims***

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for muting zero level pulse code modulated (PCM) samples received as inputs to a digital to analog converter (DAC) including a PCM input module and a mapping module, the method comprising:

monitoring a level of the PCM samples received as inputs to the PCM input module;

sensing consecutive zero level PCM samples from among the monitored input PCM samples; and

muting a PCM input to the mapper when only a single parameter has been sensed, the single parameter being a predetermined number of consecutive zero level PCM samples ~~have been sensed~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising un-muting the PCM input to the mapper when a first non-zero level PCM sample ~~is~~ has been sensed.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the muting and un-muting is configured for autonomous activation.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined number is programmable.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the non-zero level PCM sample immediate immediately follows the consecutive zero level PCM samples.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for muting zero level pulse code modulated (PCM) samples received as inputs to a digital to analog converter (DAC) including a PCM input module and a mapping module, the apparatus comprising:  
means for monitoring a level of the PCM samples received as inputs to the PCM input module;

means for sensing consecutive zero level PCM samples from among the monitored input PCM samples; and

means for muting a PCM input to the mapper when only a single parameter has been sensed, the single parameter being a predetermined number of consecutive zero level PCM samples have been sensed.

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 6, further comprising means for un-muting the PCM input to the mapper when a first non-zero level PCM sample has been sensed.

8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 2 7, wherein the muting and un-muting is automatic.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 6, wherein the predetermined number is programmable.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the non-zero level PCM sample immediate immediately follows the consecutive zero level PCM samples.

11. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the zero level PCM sample is the set of all values that fall below a predetermined level programmed by a system user.

12. (New) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the zero level PCM sample is the set of all values that fall below a predetermined level programmed by a system user.